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Commissioner

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
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Enclosure 7c
May 3, 2012

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TO: Members of the Board of Regents

FROM: Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner

RE: Renewal of the Compass School Charter by the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education

The charter of the Compass School expires at the conclusion of the 2011-12 school year. In accordance with the Board of Regents Regulations Governing Public Charter Schools C-4-3, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) coordinated the process of evaluating Compass' performance over the past five years to determine the merits of charter renewal.

Review Process

- Over the past two years, RIDE has developed a rigorous evaluation of charter school performance, guided by three questions:
 - Is the school's educational program an academic success?
 - Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for academic success?
 - Is the school a viable organization?

Because the review was not complete at the time of analysis, The Compass School went through a targeted version of the full review.

The first portion of the review – is the school's educational program an academic success? – was designed to consider all relevant student outcome measures, including mathematics and ELA NECAP performance, IDEA SPP indicators, graduation rates, federal Adequate Yearly Progress designations, and, if applicable, ACCESS proficiency and graduation rates.

The second portion of the review – is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success? – was designed to gauge the quality of instructional leadership, instruction, and curriculum (mathematics and ELA only) at each school relative to the standards set forth in the Board of Regents Basic Education Program. Evidence for this portion of the review was gathered through a two-day site visit and, where applicable, the findings of 2010 Commissioner’s Review Process.

The third portion of the review – is the school a viable organization? – was designed to consider whether or not schools are using public funds responsibly and appropriately. RIDE staff reviewed each school’s financial audits over the course of the charter term, as well as other relevant documentation on the school’s compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.

- The school was required to complete a renewal application. This application provides an opportunity: (1) to present any important new or supplemental information pertaining to the above guiding questions, to enable a more comprehensive assessment of school performance; and (2) to articulate the school’s strategies and capacities for sustaining success and continuing to improve over the next charter term.

Key Findings

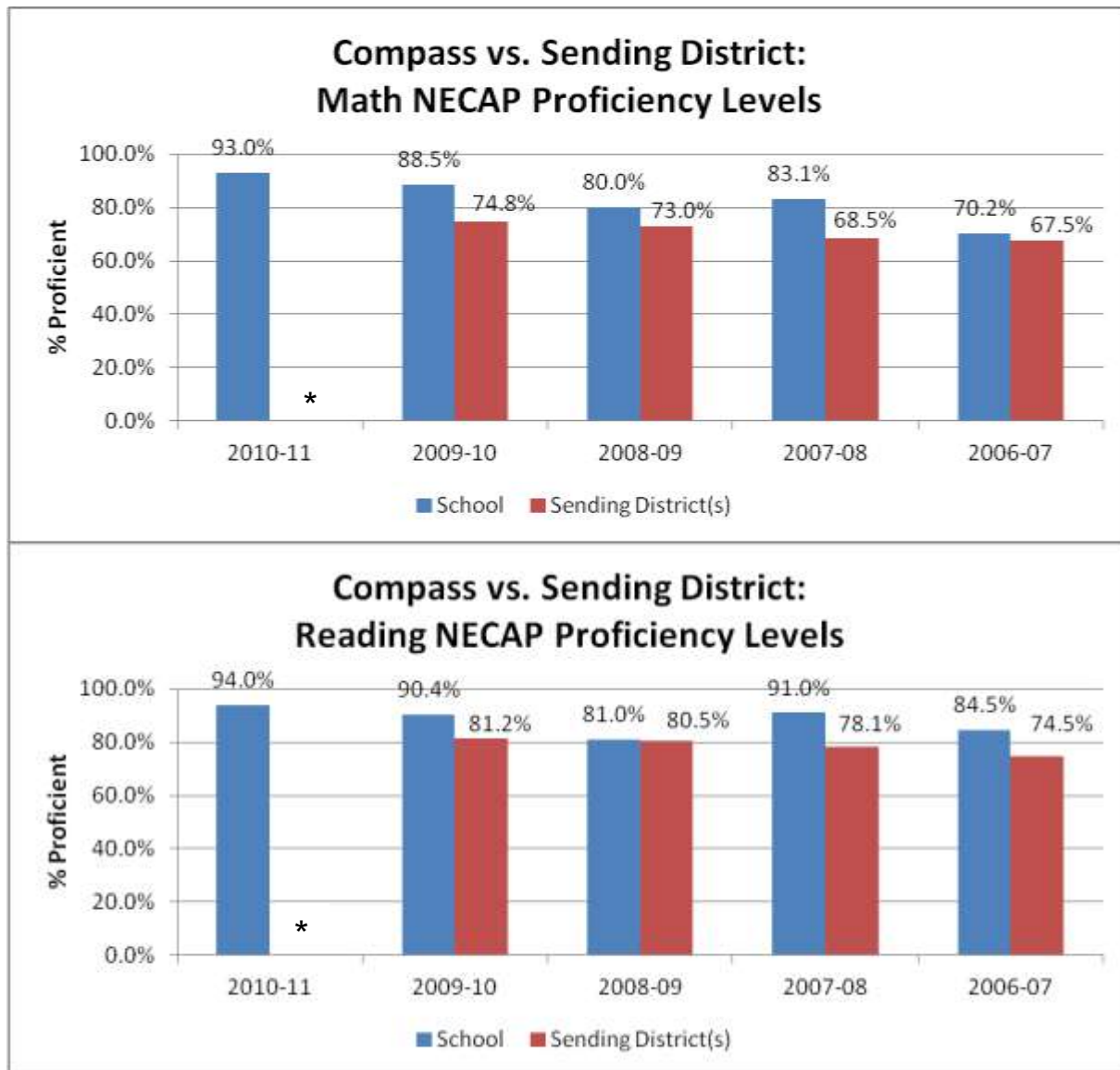
- The educational program at the Compass School is an academic success. With few exceptions in its most recent charter term, the school has significantly outperformed its sending districts and similar schools statewide on both the NECAP mathematics and reading [See Attachment 1]. The school’s student growth percentiles (SGP) have steadily increased over the last three years. Compass’ median SGP has improved from being in the middle 60% of schools in Rhode Island to being in the top 20% in the most recent school year. The school has met AYP without safe harbor provisions in all years of the most recent charter term.
- The Compass School is providing many of the key appropriate conditions for success. Our review indicates that the school has many of the internal systems and structures to measurably improve achievement of its students:
 - Overall, the visit team found the Compass School’s leadership to be strong. The Council (the school’s governing board) and the School Director are focused on student learning and engage in reflective practices that reinforce that focus.
 - The school’s leadership has developed a clear instructional philosophy that was consistently implemented as observed.

- The visit team found the following areas of improvement: ELA and mathematics curricula are not fully documented, and staff made limited use of student data to support student learning. The school's renewal application notes that the school will continue its curriculum development efforts and will bolster its efforts to use assessment data to evaluate programs.
- For the financial review, RIDE reviewed audit history for the charter term. The Compass School has received unqualified opinions on all of its audits in the most recent charter term and is materially compliant with applicable statutory and regulatory obligations.

THEREFORE, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education renew the charter of the Compass School for a five (5) year term, to operate in accordance with the renewed Charter from the 2012-13 school year to the 2016-17 school year. To be eligible for future charter renewal, the school must demonstrate overall success by:

- attaining student achievement goals as defined by the Charter Performance Review Handbook. And,
- demonstrating the management and leadership necessary to establish a thriving, financially viable charter public school as defined by the organizational performance goals in the Charter Performance Review Handbook. And,
- ensuring that all operational elements of the school meet statutory and regulatory guidelines.

Attachment 1:



Sending District = A weighted average of a school's sending district(s)' proficiency levels. Compass draws its students from districts statewide.

* Comparative data is not yet available for the 2010-11 teaching year.

Compass School Student Growth Percentiles			
	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011**
Reading	Typical (46th percentile)	Typical (60th percentile)	Above Typical (61.5th percentile)
Mathematics	Typical (50th percentile)	Above Typical (62nd percentile)	Above Typical (77th percentile)

** Measurement is approximate

Student Growth Percentiles (SGP) = Median SGP is a measure of how a school's students are progressing on NECAP annually compared to all other schools' students in Rhode Island. Please visit <http://1.usa.gov/o9LrgC> to learn more about SGP.

A school with **above typical** SGP is performing roughly within the top 20% of schools in Rhode Island. A school with **typical** SGP is performing roughly within the middle 60% of schools in Rhode Island. A school with **below typical** SGP is performing roughly within the bottom 20% of schools in Rhode Island.

Compass School						
		2006-2007 TcY	2007-2008 TcY	2008-2009 TcY	2009-2010 TcY	2010-2011 TcY
Proficiency Level	Reading	85%	91%	81%	90%	94%
	Math	70%	81%	80%	89%	93%
1.1 Sending District	Read	Above Typical	Above Typical	Above Typical	Above Typical	N/A
	Math	Above Typical	Above Typical	Above Typical	Above Typical	N/A
1.2 Similar Schools	Reading (ES)	Typical	Above Typical	Typical	Above Typical	N/A
	Math(ES)	Typical	Above Typical	Above Typical	Above Typical	N/A
	Reading (MS)	Above Typical	Above Typical	Typical	Typical	N/A
	Math (MS)	Above typical	Typical	Above Typical	Above Typical	N/A
1.3 Growth	Reading			Typical	Above Typical	N/A
	Math			Typical	Above Typical	N/A
1.5 AYP		Met	Met	Met	Met	N/A